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Action
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Info

FROM: BERL IN

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 572, MAY 25, 7 P.M.

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SENT BONN 525, DEPARTMENT 572, REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 272,
LONDON 241, MOSCOW 255

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PARIS FOR EMBASSY, USRO, STOESSEL, CINCEUR FOR FINN

RRM

ON ASSUMPTION BERLIN WILL BE AMONG MAJOR ISSUES DISCUSSED
VIENNA, I SHOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE SEVERAL ASPECTS BERLIN
PROBLEM THAT APPEAR IMPORTANT FROM VANTAGE POINT OF BERLIN
ITSELF.

BASIC SOV AIM TOWARD BERLIN UNCHANGED THOUGH TACTICS APPARENTLY
HAVE BECOME MORE REASONABLE AS RESULT OF WESTERN RESISTANCE.
WEST BERLIN HAS REMAINED FREE BECAUSE SOVS HAVE REALIZED THAT
PRECIPITATE ACTION TO ABSORB IT INTO GDR WOULD ENTAIL GRAVE
RISK OF WAR.

PLAYING ON WEST'S STRONG DESIRE AVOID WAR, SOVS TRYING PUSH
US INTO MAKING NEW ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL APPEAR REASONABLE
BUT ACTUALLY WILL START EROSION PROCESS ENDING IN BERLIN'S
ABSORPTION INTO GDR.

SOVS AND GDR IN MAJOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN SINCE ABORTIVE
SUMMIT HAVE BEEN TRYING SOFTEN UP WEST BY CONVINCING US
(1) KHRUSHCHEV REALLY MEANS HE CANNOT WAIT ANY LONGER AND
INTENDS SOON TO FORCE ISSUE THROUGH CONCLUSION SEPARATE PEACE
TREATY; (2) SOVS CERTAIN WEST WILL NOT FIGHT FOR BERLIN;
(3) WE SHOULD THEREFORE AGREE ON INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS (A LA
/GENEVA 1959)

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State Dept NLR-76-284

By: MPO NARS, Date 6-11-76

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-2- 572, MAY 25, 7 P.M. FROM BERLIN

GENEVA 1959) OR FACE CONSEQUENCES.

ALTHOUGH CONTINUING FLOW OF REFUGEES MAY CONSTITUTE SERIOUS LONG RANGE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PROBLEM FOR GDR AND IS CERTAINLY AN ACUTE IRRITANT, PRESSURES ON KHRUSHCHEV FROM GDR TO SOLVE BERLIN SITUATION ARE PROBABLY NO GREATER TODAY THAN IN RECENT PAST. CERTAIN COMPULSION FOR A BERLIN "SOLUTION" EXISTS AS A RESULT OF KHRUSHCHEV'S OWN ARTIFICIALLY STIMULATED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, WHICH CREATES A FACE-SAVING PROBLEM. HOWEVER, FREQUENTLY MENTIONED PRESSURE TO REPORT PROGRESS ON BERLIN TO CPSU CONGRESS IN OCTOBER SHOULD HAVE DECLINED IN LIGHT SOV SPACE SUCCESS AND ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN LAOS AND CUBA. IN SHORT SOVS COULD LIVE WITH BERLIN STATUS QUO FOR SOME TIME.

I DOUBT IF KHRUSHCHEV HAS FIRM POLICY DECISION OR TIMETABLE ON BERLIN AT THIS MOMENT; FACT NO REAL BERLIN SHOWDOWN DURING PAST TWO AND ONE/HALF YEARS INDICATES INTER ALIA SOVS NOT SURE UNPREDICTABLE WEST WILL NOT FIGHT FOR BERLIN. IN THIS SITUATION WITH BOTH SIDES HEAVILY COMMITTED TO RETAIN POSITIONS AND NEITHER ANXIOUS TO FORCE MATTERS TO SHOWDOWN THAT COULD PRECIPITATE WAR, VIENNA MEETING PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY, PERHAPS ONE OF LAST OPPORTUNITIES, TO CONVINCE KHRUSHCHEV OF U.S. DETERMINATION MAKE GOOD ON BERLIN PLEDGES REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES.

FACT THAT KHRUSHCHEV WILL ATTEMPT CONVINCE PRESIDENT OF HIS OWN DETERMINATION SOLVE BERLIN ALONG FAMILIAR SOVIET-GDR LINES ONLY SERVES TO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL DUEL AT VIENNA. I BELIEVE SOVIET TOUGHNESS RE THEIR BERLIN INTENTIONS REFLECTS SERIOUS DESIRE CHANGE BERLIN STATUS, BUT ALSO INCLUDES LARGE ELEMENT OF BLUFF. I DOUBT SOV RESOLVE IS SUFFICIENT TO RISK THERMO-NUCLEAR WAR. THEREFORE, AT THIS STAGE, U.S. MUST BE EVEN TOUGHER IF KHRUSHCHEV IS TO GO AWAY FROM VIENNA CONVINCED HIS THREATS ARE TOO RISKY TO WARRANT CARRYING THEM OUT.

/I REALIZE

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-3- 572, MAY 25, 7 P.M. FROM BERLIN

I REALIZE PRESIDENT IN FIRST MEETING WITH KHRUSHCHEV WILL NOT WISH APPEAR UNREASONABLE; HOWEVER, ANY INDICATION PRESIDENT WILLING DISCUSS "INTERIM SOLUTIONS," COMPROMISES, OR MODUS VIVENDI IF SOVS SIGN SEPARATE PEACE TREATY, WOULD REDUCE IMPACT OF WARNING KHRUSHCHEV OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES HIS MISCALCULATING OUR RESOLVE.

FACT THAT IN THIS MEETING THINGS CAN BE SAID WHICH CANNOT BE SPELLED OUT IN QUADRIPARTITE CONFERENCE MAY GIVE PRESIDENT OPPORTUNITY TELL KHRUSHCHEV IN BLUNT LANGUAGE THAT WE CONSIDER USSR SOLELY TO BLAME FOR DIVISION OF GERMANY AND DENIAL RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO GERMAN PEOPLE; SOVS SHOULD KEEP HANDS OFF BERLIN WHERE U.S. COMMITTED TO STAY; THERE REALLY NOTHING FURTHER TO DISCUSS ON BERLIN ITSELF.

IN SUM, VIENNA WILL BE PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING GROUND AND U.S. POSITION ON BERLIN IN MY VIEW SHOULD BE MOLDED CAREFULLY TO CREATE STRONGEST POSSIBLE IMPRESSION ON KHRUSHCHEV OF U.S. FIRMNESS OF INTENTION ON BERLIN IN EFFORT TO DETER HIM FURTHER FROM COURSE OF ACTION HE HAS BEEN THREATENING SINCE NOV 1958.

LIGHTNER

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